

African Politics & International Relations

Gordon & Gordon Chapter 4 & 6

Donald Gordon: African Politics

- **Centralization:** at independence the main challenge to leaders was to build and maintain unity.
- Centralization of state power was primary concern of new governments.
- Concentration of political power & control achieved primarily through:
 1. limiting/eliminating opposition
 2. expanding bureaucratic agencies & security organizations.
 3. Maintaining & expanding systems for taxing rural cash crop producers.

Single party state

- By late 1960s most common political organization of new African nations was a single party state.
- Ruling groups fortified three main government structures:
 1. administrative bureaucracies (civil service)
 2. military & police
 3. executive branch (President/Prime Minister)

Patronage, Patrimonial State, & Personal Rule

- To maintain themselves in power, African leaders needed strong bases of support.
- Approach taken was *discretionary distribution of patronage & development of patron-client ties* to individuals & groups.



Mobutu Sese Seko, Zaire



Hastings Banda, Malawi

Patronage, Patrimonial State, & Personal Rule

- Essence of patrimonial rule is *personalization of power* by a country's ruler.
- In some countries the personal authority of a strongman ruler became virtually synonymous with government itself.
- Personal rule depends on a *combination of patronage and coercion*.
- Maintaining patronage networks & forces of coercion requires a huge amount of money.
- Increasing opportunities for those in government to use their positions for personal gain.
- Ghanaian economist George Ayittey on Cheetahs vs. Hippos, Vampire States.



Political Economy of Decline

- Resources needed for effective, broad scale development were drained away by efforts to support and consolidate power.
- Private appropriation of state resources and use of government money to build and expand personal rule lay at heart of process by which most post-colonial regimes sought to govern.



Mobutu Sese Seko & Richard Nixon in Washington, D.C., 1973



MOBUTU SESE SEKO PRESIDENT DE L'EX ZAIRE



Basilica of Our Lady of Peace, Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast

- Constructed between 1985-1989, cost of \$300 million.
- Guinness World Records lists it as largest church in world, having surpassed previous record holder, St. Peter's Basilica, upon completion.
- 322,917 sq. ft. in area, 518 ft. high.
- In 1983 President Félix Houphouët-Boigny chose his birthplace of Yamoussoukro to be future site of new capital city of Cote D'Ivoire.
- As part of plan of the city, Houphouët-Boigny wanted to memorialize himself with construction of what he called the greatest church in world.
- He is even pictured besides Jesus in one stained-glass panel.



Political economy of decline

- Government economic policies handicapped farmers.
- Development of rural areas suffered.
- Prices kept low for urban residents since they constituted a potential source of instability.
- One major result was increase in rural to urban migration.
- Most often men moving to cities in search of work; women & children remain home in villages.



Structural adjustment & reordering of the state

- By early 1980s most African governments did not have capacity to meet growing budget requirements.
- Had to begin borrowing heavily to finance their operations.
- By 1990, 40% of export earnings were needed to pay interest on loans.
- To get these loans governments had to agree to ***structural adjustment***, as spelled out by World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Structural adjustment policies

- Measures include:
 1. currency devaluation.
 2. freeze on government salaries.
 3. ending price supports for agricultural products & subsidies for urban consumers.
 4. ending import restrictions.
 5. privatization of state owned operations – airlines, railways, power companies, telephone companies, etc.
 6. increase in bank interest rates to encourage savings & generate capital investment.

Political Economy of Democratization

- IMF & World Bank based policies on assumptions that African countries could only build strong economies by focusing on increased sales of primary products – unprocessed raw agricultural and mineral products.
- Another goal was to open African states to investment from outside, especially wealthy industrial states.
- Was believed that the benefits of structural adjustment would quickly “revive and modernize” African economies.
- Political reform, democracy and development of civil society would promoted.
- The outcome has been very different.
- To be continued.

African International Relations

Peter Schraeder

- Major events that influenced evolution of African international relations since late 19th century:
 1. **Conference of Berlin, 1884-1885.**
 2. **World War II & emergence of African nationalist movements.**
 3. **Cold War (1947-1989).**
 4. End of Cold War with fall of Berlin Wall & its replacement with **Cold Peace** – competition for economic superiority in highly competitive environment of 1990s.
 5. Growing competition between today's economic superpowers: China, Germany, Japan, U.S. [BRICS?]

BRICS

- An association of emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China & South Africa.
- With exception of Russia BRICS members are all developing or newly industrialized countries.
- Are distinguished by their large, fast-growing economies and significant influence on regional and global affairs.
- As of 2013, BRICS countries represent almost 3 billion people, with a combined nominal GDP of US\$14.9 trillion, and an estimated US\$4 trillion in combined foreign reserves.
- Presently, South Africa holds the chair of the BRICS group.



African International Relations

- Schraeder explores 6 topics:
 1. Formulation & implementation of African foreign policies.
 2. Pan-Africanism & African Union.
 3. Regional economic cooperation & integration.
 4. Role of foreign powers in African international relations.
 5. U.N. and international financial institutions (World Bank and IMF).
 6. Emerging trends related to military intervention on African continent.

Formulation & Implementation of African Foreign Policies

- Big man syndrome characterized first generation of African leadership.
- Result was highly personalized foreign policy machinery based on idiosyncrasies of individual Presidents.
- These same big men often pursued foreign policies that were tied to those of former colonial power.
- Leaders were more responsive to the policy concerns of foreign patrons than to popular demands of their own people.

African International Relations

- Democratization of African foreign policies.
- Related to rise of a new generation of African Presidents less tied to former foreign patrons & more willing to pursue increasingly independent foreign policies.
- Process has led to strengthening of institutional actors, such as increasingly independent & vocal national legislatures.
- Greater popular input as leaders are increasingly more being held accountable to public opinion.
- Religious groups and leaders – especially Islamist movements – also having impact on African foreign policies.
- Guerilla groups opposed to central authority of their countries can promote parallel diplomatic networks to promote their causes.
 - Although the tendency is to see this as negative, must remember that the ANC was the guerilla insurgency that had most extensive diplomatic network (1960-1994).

African International Relations

- Pan-Africanism & Organization of African Unity.
- Ideal of African unity first articulated at **Pan-African Congress** held in Manchester, England 1945.
- Kwame Nkrumah – realization of Pan-African ideal will entail four stages:
 1. Attainment of freedom & independence.
 2. Consolidation of that independence & freedom.
 3. Creation of unity & community between African states.
 4. Economic and social reconstruction of Africa.

African International Relations

- Organization of African Unity created May 25, 1963 (replaced in 2002 by African Union).
- First pan-African, intergovernmental organization of independent African countries based on African soil.
- HQ in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Major decisions & resolutions formally discussed at annual Assembly of Heads of State & Government.

African International Relations

- Guiding themes/principles of OAU:
 1. Support for the **inviolability of frontiers** inherited from colonial era
 - African leaders steadfast in their commitment to maintaining borders inherited from colonialism.
 2. **Noninterference in internal affairs** of member states.
 - Criticized for functioning as a club of Presidents engaged in tacit policy of not inquiring into each others practices.

African International Relations

3. **Peaceful settlement of all disputes** by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, or arbitration.
 - Strict adherence to principles of territorial integrity and noninterference in internal affairs impeded OAU's ability to mediate.
4. Unswerving **opposition to colonialism and white minority rule.**
 - OAU established Liberation Committee based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania to aid liberation movements with economic & military assistance.

African International Relations

- OAU ended in 2002 and African Union (AU) began, hoping to build on successes of OAU in continuing search for African unity.
- Led by a 10 member executive body – the African Commission – composed of chairperson, deputy chairperson, & 8 commissioners who are responsible for 8 portfolios:
 1. Political affairs
 2. Peace & security
 3. Infrastructure & energy
 4. Social affairs
 5. Human resources, science, technology
 6. Rural economy & agriculture

African International Relations

- Differences between OAU and AU:
 - **AU has not enshrined inviolability of frontiers** inherited from colonial rule.
 - **AU rejects principle of noninterference** in domestic affairs of member nations.
 - **AU has right to intervene** in cases of gross violation of human rights & war crimes.

African International Relations

- Regional economic cooperation & integration.
- Several rationales used:
 - Strength in numbers – banding together and pooling resources in order to better compete with economic superpowers.
 - Desire to promote self sustaining economic development & industrialization of continent .
 - Regional economic schemes seemed best means of creating self-reliant development & reducing ties of dependency.

African International Relations

- East African Community comprised of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda(1967-1977).
- Initial failure related to:
 - Polarization of national development & perception of unequal gains.
 - Inadequate compensatory & corrective measures
 - Ideological differences and rise of economic nationalism.
- Revived in 2000, with inclusion of Rwanda & Burundi.
- SADC (Southern African Development Community) constitutes another example of a regional organization.